

Listing of the Claims:

1 – 49. (Canceled)

50. (New) In a network having software implementations deployed therein, a method for determining a set of software implementations to deploy to a client, comprising:

maintaining a plurality of group policies of which the client is a member, each policy specifying at least one of a plurality of software implementations to apply to the client;

maintaining precedence information at a network location indicative of precedence relationships between software implementations;

determining from the plurality of group policies at least one of the plurality of software implementations to apply to the client;

selecting a software implementation that is specified for deployment to the client as a selected software implementation; and

determining from the precedence information whether the selected software implementation has precedence over at least one other software implementation that is also specified for deployment to the client, and if so, setting the selected software implementation for deployment and deselecting the at least one other software implementation.

51. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein setting the selected software implementation for deployment comprises setting the selected software implementation for install.

52. (New) The method of claim 51 wherein setting the selected software implementation for install comprises including the software implementation in a list of software implementations to install.

53. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising installing the selected software implementation.

54. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising advertising the selected software implementation as available to the user for execution on a computer system prior to actual installation of the software implementation on the computer system.

55. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein deselecting comprises setting the at least one other software implementation for uninstall.

56. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising uninstalling the at least one other software implementation.

57. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein deselecting comprises removing the at least one other software implementation from the set of software implementations to deploy.

58. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the precedence information indicative of precedence relationships between software implementations is maintained in a class store of the network.

59. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the class store is associated with a group policy object provided for the client.

60. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the precedence information indicative of precedence relationships between software implementations is maintained in property values for the software implementations.

61. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the precedence information indicative of precedence relationships between software implementations includes a property value indicative of whether to replace or overlay another software implementation.

62. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the client is a user, and wherein selecting a software implementation as a selected software implementation automatically occurs as part of a user logon.

63. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the client is a user, and wherein selecting a software implementation as a selected software implementation occurs in response to a user request.

64. (New) The method of claim 50 wherein the client is a machine, and wherein selecting a software implementation as a selected software implementation automatically occurs when the machine connects to the network.

65. (New) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 50.

66. (New) A method for implementing a lifecycle for software implementations deployed in a network, comprising:

maintaining policy information for several groups of clients at a network location including software implementations to deploy to each group of clients;

maintaining precedence relationships between the software implementations;

receiving a request to deploy a plurality of software implementations to a client belonging to at least two groups;

locating the policy information corresponding to the groups; and

determining for at least one software implementation in the request to apply another software implementation to the client based on the precedence relationships.

67. (New) The method of claim 66 wherein determining for at least one software implementation in the request to apply another software implementation to the client comprises setting the another software implementation for install when the another software implementation has precedence over the at least one software implementation.

68. (New) The method of claim 67 further comprising installing the another software implementation.

69. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein the installation is mandatory.

70. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein the client is a user, and wherein installing the another software implementation is optional for that user.

71. (New) The method of claim 66 wherein determining for at least one software implementation in the request to apply another software implementation to the client comprises removing the at least one software implementation from a

list of software implementations to install when the another software implementation has precedence over the at least one software implementation.

72. (New) The method of claim 71 further comprising installing the another software implementation, wherein installing the another software implementation overlays the at least one software implementation.

73. (New) The method of claim 66 wherein determining for at least one software implementation in the request to apply another software implementation to the client comprises setting the at least one software implementation for uninstall when the another software implementation has precedence over the at least one software implementation.

74. (New) The method of claim 73 further comprising uninstalling the at least one software implementation and installing the another software implementation.

75. (New) The method of claim 66 further comprising specifying the precedence relationships for the groups of clients.

76. (New) The method of claim 75 wherein specifying the precedence relationships for the groups of clients comprises specifying a pilot group of clients that is small relative to a total number of clients of the network.

77. (New) The method of claim 76 wherein specifying the precedence relationships for the groups of clients comprises specifying a rollout group of clients that is relatively larger than the pilot group and smaller than the total number of clients of the network.

78. (New) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 66.

79. (New) A computer-implemented method, comprising:

- maintaining first data specifying that a first software implementation is desired to be deployed to a client;
- maintaining second data specifying that a second software implementation is desired to be deployed to the client;
- maintaining precedence information specifying a precedence relationship between the first software implementation and the second software implementation; and
- accessing the first data, second data and precedence information to deploy the first software implementation to the client and not deploy the second software implementation to the client, based on the precedence information.

80. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first software implementation is deployed to the client by installing the first software implementation on a computer system associated with the client.

81. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first software implementation is deployed to the client by including the software implementation in a list of software implementations to install on a computer system associated with the client.

82. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first software implementation is deployed to the client by advertising the selected software implementation as available to the user for execution on a computer system prior to actual installation of the software implementation on the computer system.

83. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising uninstalling the second software implementation.

84. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising installing the first software implementation and uninstalling the second software implementation.

85. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising overlaying the second software implementation while installing the first software implementation.

86. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first data, second data and precedence information is accessed in response to a user logon.

87. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first data, second data and precedence information is accessed in response to a user request.

88. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein the first data, second data and precedence information is accessed in response to a machine connecting to a network.

89. (New) The method of claim 79 further comprising specifying the precedence information for a group of clients.

90. (New) The method of claim 89 wherein specifying the precedence information comprises selecting as the group of clients a pilot group that is small relative to a total number of clients of a network.

91. (New) The method of claim 90 wherein specifying the precedence information comprises selecting as the group of clients a rollout group of clients that is relatively larger than the pilot group and relatively smaller than the total number of clients of the network.

92. (New) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 79.

93. (New) A computer-implemented method for determining a set of software implementations to deploy to a client, comprising:

maintaining policy information specifying at least one software implementation for deployment to a first group of clients;

maintaining policy information specifying at least one software implementation for deployment to a second group of clients;

maintaining precedence information specifying a precedence relationship between software implementations available for deployment to clients;

accessing the precedence information to determine which software implementation to select for deployment to a client belonging to both the first group of clients and the second group of clients;

determining from the specified precedence relationship that one software implementation has precedence over at least one other software implementation that is also designated for deployment to the client; and

selecting the software implementation that has precedence over the other software implementation that is also designated for deployment to the client.

94. (New) The method of claim 93 further comprising advertising the selected software implementation as available to the user for execution on the client prior to actual installation of the software implementation on the client.

95. (New) The method of claim 93 further comprising installing the selected software implementation on the client.

96. (New) The method of claim 93 further comprising uninstalling the other software implementation from the client.

97. (New) The method of claim 93 wherein the precedence information specifying a precedence relationship between software implementations comprises precedence information specifying the precedence relationship between software implementations for a group of clients.

98. (New) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 93.